

MAIL-CART DIALOGUE.

II.

"CAN you see anything of her?" said the infant, whose range of vision was limited to smoking chimneys and electric tram standards, owing to its supine position in the mail-cart.

"Yes, I can see her right enough," replied Twoyears, craning round the hood and peering through the glass door into the dim interior of the draper's shop, where Nurse sat absorbed at the ribbon counter.

"How much longer is she going to be?" inquired the infant, peevishly squirming about under the strap.

"Oh, give her time," said Twoyears; "she's only had seven boxes down yet. The postman winked at her this morning, you know, so she's buying a new ribbon for her cap on the strength of it. —Oh don't start crying, for goodness sake; I get enough of that in the nursery. Do draw it mild in the mail-cart."

"But I'm teething," whimpered the other.

"Well, if you are you'd better keep it to yourself, or they'll start vaccinating you at once."

"What!" ejaculated the baby, "don't I suffer enough as it is with my gums but they must go and dig holes in my arm, and then grumble if I cry."

"Ah, that's where they have you! They vaccinate you when you're teething, so that one cry does for both. Being the eldest of the family I fell into the trap—but you take my tip, cry *now* for your gums and in six months' time for your arm, even though it's quite better."

"But they'll think me such a disagreeable baby if I cry for nothing."

"I daresay they'll do that anyhow."

Uncertain how to take this the baby pulled down its lip as the easiest way out of the dilemma, when the other hastily interposed—

"Come—cheer up, Chummie—you're not in your bath anyhow—and if you were you'd have a better time than I did at your age. That was before we made our money. We only kept a general. I shan't forget Mother's first attempt at bathing me."

"Did you cry?" said the infant with interest.

"Yes, to a certain extent, but not so much as she did—and oh, how hot she got! She was frightened of drowning me, so as soon as I saw an opening I slipped into the deep water of the basin, and she nipped me out in no time. It was a dodge worth repeating. Not that pretending to drown in soapy water is all jam. But you're young yet for that sort of thing—and anyhow you'll find people won't worry you as long as you'll keep asleep."



G. L. SCAMPER.

WHERE THERE'S A WILL AND NO WAY.

Stout Party. "NOW THEN, YOUNG LADY, DON'T SIT ON ME, PLEASE!"

Young Lady (sweetly). "I'LL TRY NOT TO."

"Oh, won't they?" said the baby. "I don't believe there's a single person of my acquaintance, from Nurse's aunt to the Kitchenmaid's grandmother, but runs her finger round my gums every time we meet."

"Oh—women! Perhaps so—you're one of them; but you won't find men noticing a kid of your sex and age."

"But they do. Nearly every man in the street speaks to me as he passes."

"Well, it's very unusual, then," cried Twoyears. "What do they say?"

"They say, 'Hallo, Baby! how's Nurse?'"

"Well, of course," said Twoyears

after a pause, "I don't want to doubt your word, but it's unusual. You *are* a girl, aren't you?"

"I believe so," said the infant doubtfully. "I fancy I heard Nurse say so."

"Oh, you must be, from the bonnet. If you were a boy, like me, you'd wear a fluffy white mortarboard thing two sizes too large for you, with a tendency to tilt over one eye. You're a girl right enough, though what they want more girls for beats me. There's a baby girl next door, two opposite, and hundreds of them in the Park. What's the good of them?—that's what I want to know."

"You wait a bit," said the infant.

LATEST IMPERIAL POLICY.

In these days, when farcical comedies, musical comedies, and such-like theatrical absurdities, constitute the most popular form of theatrical entertainment, that a play so scant of plot, so bare of strong situations, and with exceptionally long soliloquies, as SHAKESPEARE'S *Henry the Fifth*, should arouse audience after audience, representative of all sorts and conditions of Englishmen and Englishwomen, to such a pitch of honest enthusiasm as seldom greets even an exceptionally sensational melodrama, is a remarkable fact, constituting a genuine and thoroughly well-merited tribute to the discernment of Mr. LEWIS WALLER as a Manager, to the excellence of his own impersonation of the warrior King, pious as he is chivalrous, and to the intelligent acting of a first-rate working company.

Unfortunately on the occasion of the visit of Mr. Punch's Representative to the Imperial Theatre, Miss MARY RORKE, who should have played the part of *Chorus*, one of the many exceptional charms of this revival, was suffering from loss of voice, and unable to appear. The entire audience sincerely sympathised with her, as they also suffered from loss of voice, and that voice, hers.

The cast is too full—there are some thirty-eight speaking parts—for this Representative to give adequate praise to each and every one, where all are so exceptionally good. He would like to see Mr. FRANK DYALL, as the *Dauphin*, more lively, gay, and light-hearted, than he is; for is he not the practical humourist who has sent that box of tennis-balls to the English King? The *Dauphin* should be in strong contrast to HENRY, reminding one rather of what the latter had been when he was HARRY MOXMOOUTH.

Mr. THOMAS KINGSTON, as *Corporal Nym*, overdoes the make-up and the business of this part, notably where his by-play detracts from the pathetic interest aroused by the *Hostess's* (Miss M. GRIFFIN) touchingly natural description of the death of Sir John Falstaff. Mr. WILLIAM CALVERT'S *Bardolph* is good.

The rendering by Mr. JOHN BEAUCHAMP of two characters so distinct as the determined but courtly *Archbishop of Canterbury* and the vacillating French King *Charles the Sixth*, is admirable. Full of humour is the Welsh Captain *Gower* of Mr. EDMUND FERRIS, though, if he will cudgel the unfortunate *Pistol* so severely, it seems to me that Mr. WILLIAM MOLLISON, the artistic representative of this cowardly, bombastic, amusing knave, the last of poor *Falstaff's* followers, takes the chastisement far too stolidly, rarely uttering a cry, hardly writhing, and never once attempting to escape.

Than Miss KATE RUSKIN as the *Boy, Falstaff's* page, no better representative could be found. Her French conversation and her acting as the interpreter between swaggering bully *Pistol* and the unfortunate French nobleman (who surely ought not to be represented by Mr. CHARLES MEYER as so utterly abject a victim), is thoroughly natural, and adds greatly to the humour of this absurdly burlesque scene. By the way, how has it come about that this sharp-witted, decently educated youth should have been in the confidential service of the Fat Knight and his company of blackguards? Much might be written on this page.

Miss SARAH BROOKE is charming as *Katharine*, and the light courtship duologue between the French Princess, speaking her own language fluently, and *King Henry*, whose education has been so neglected that he cannot, as a linguist, be classed with *Falstaff's* page, attempting to express himself in the same tongue, is, as a detached scene, a delightful bit of comedy, recalling for a moment, as does the practical joke of the leek, the days when the King, a gay young man about town, larked with *Doll*, being quite unrestrained by the etiquette that now fetters him as the reformed rake, the manly, pious and bluff soldier-King.

Most heartily does Mr. Punch's Representative congratulate Mr. WALLER on his rendering of this fine declamatory part, and on the entire representation. Great praise is due to Messrs. HELMSLEY and BANKS for their effective scenery, and to Mr. RAYMOND ROZE for his music, though one can have a little too much of even this good thing. SHAKESPEARE'S historic play is not a *ballet d'action*.

THE GROWING IMPOTENCE OF THE PRESS.

[If we are to believe the statement that a vast majority in the country is opposed to fiscal reform, we have the remarkable phenomenon of an overwhelming proportion of the London Press diametrically opposed to public opinion on the most vital question of the hour.]

As Thought acquires an ampler sway
I've watched the old illusions die,
And felt it only right to lay
The facts before the common eye;
I've admitted a gradual breach
In the faiths that we used to confess,
But to one I have clung like a leech—
I allude to the Power of the Press.

When sceptics thus assailed my creed:
"These writers by the day or week—
Are they a supernatural breed
Of genius, giant, god or freak?"
I replied, "They are human, of course,
But the might that they wield with the pen
Is a very mysterious force
As employed in the moulding of men!"

Some say it was the breakfast hour,
When intellects are passing cheap,
Which gave the Press its plastic power
Over a public dazed with sleep;
For myself not a rap do I care
How it came to impose on the brain;
It has burst like a bubble in air,
It has soared to the sightless inane!

Vainly, to judge by truant votes,
Some 85 per cent. or so
Of London's journalistic throats
Urge the reforms of Fiscal Joe;
For the louder they din in her ears
That her commerce is going askew,
The more firmly the country adheres
To precisely the opposite view.

Yet readers love the patriot page;
No Little Englanders are these;
For joy of Empire they'll engage
To go and maffick all you please;
They have dreamt an Imperial dream
Of the Fowl and her Filial Brood,
But they couldn't consent to a scheme
That affected the bulk of their Food.

It seems, at sight, a trivial phrase—
"Your Loaf—he means to make it less!"
Yet none who knows our little ways
Will wonder how it hurt the Press;
For your Briton's a person of sense
When you get at his innermost core;
His regard for the Mail is immense,
But the love of his tummy is more! O. S.

WE learn from the *St. James's Gazette* that at Mr. CHAMBERLAIN'S meeting at Gainsborough all the 600 guinea seats on the platform were taken. Surely a record price!



MOST EMBARRASSING !

MISS TRANSVAAL. "HENRY DEAR, YOU WON'T FORGET YOUR PROMISE WHEN YOUR SHIP COMES HOME?"

[“The Boers, we are told, regard General Botha's declaration as nailing Sir HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN to his speech at South Queensferry, so that, whenever his party comes into office, he may remember his pledge to grant autonomy to the new Colonies.”—“Times,” January 31.]





A LESSON IN POLITENESS.

Bobbie (taking the second apple—to Mabel). "If AUNTIE HAD PASSED THEM TO ME FIRST, I'D HAVE TAKEN THE LITTLEST ONE."
 Mabel. "WELL, WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU'VE GOT THE LITTLEST ONE!"

TO A SEMI-DETACHED
NEIGHBOUR.

AGAIN the firelight shadows mix
 Their mazy dance, and on mine ear
 Soft steals through intervening bricks
 The strain that once I held so dear.

'Tis but a simple-sounding thing,
 Yet ere an hour or so hath sped
 I feel a hopeless longing spring
 Within my breast to know you dead.

Oh count me not a Philistine,
 One of that rude, untutored throng,
 Which only designates divine
 The music of a dinner-gong.

Go, ask my relatives and those
 Who know me best, and they'll agree
 That 'neath this cold exterior glows
 A heart attuned to harmony.

Oft, oft will organ-grinders pause
 To gaze upon me in their play,
 Incredulous that they should cause
 A rapture such as I betray.

And many a wandering minstrel's eye
 Hath shed a soft Teutonic tear

Within a generous mug of my
 Imported Munich lager beer.

And yet your music stirs in me
 No subtly-sweet responsive thrill,
 Its one achievement seems to be
 To make me most supremely ill.

Is it, perchance, because your fond
 And faithful fancy scorns to roam
 To melodies that lie beyond
 The narrow range of "Home, Sweet
 Home?"

Or does this lonely, brooding heart,
 That craves a silent hour, condemn
 The way in which you always start
 At nine and play till two A.M.?

I know not, friend; I only know
 That if you do not shortly cease
 I mean to summon you to go
 Before a Justice of the Peace.

"Four men who robbed a shop at
 Shipley were traced by a trail of patent
 food." In fact the Force (headed possibly
 by P.-C. SUNNY JIM) was on their track.

THE LITTLE FATHER.

NICHOL, NICHOL, little CZAR,
 How I wonder where you are!
 You who thought it best to fly,
 Being so afraid to die.
 Now the sullen crowds are gone,
 Now there's nought to fire upon;
 Sweet your sleigh bells ring afar,
 Tinkle, tinkle, little CZAR.

Little CZAR, with soul so small,
 How are you a CZAR at all?
 Yours had been a happier lot
 In some peasant's humble cot.
 Yet to you was given a day
 With a noble part to play,
 As an Emperor and a Man;
 When it came—"then NICKY ran."

Little CZAR, beware the hour
 When the people strikes at Power;
 Soul and body held in thrall,
 They are human after all.
 Thrones that reek of blood and tears
 Fall before the avenging years.
 While you watch your sinking star,
 Tremble, tremble, little CZAR!

LIFE'S LITTLE DIFFICULTIES.

XII.—THE CHAUFFEUR.

I.

Mrs. Adrian Armyne to her sister.

(Extract.)

WE have found a most delightful chauffeur, a Frenchman named ACHILLE LE BON, who speaks English perfectly, although with a fascinating accent, and is altogether most friendly and useful. He is continually doing little things for me, and it is nice too to have someone to talk French with. ADRIAN'S conversational French has always been very rusty. You remember how in that little shop at Avignon in 1880 he said "*Quel dommage?*" for "What is the price?"

II.

Mr. Adrian Armyne to the Conservative Agent at Winchester.

MR. ADRIAN ARMYNE presents his compliments to Mr. BASHFORD, and greatly regrets what must look very like a slight in his absence from the chair at last night's meeting, but circumstances over which he had no control caused him to miss the way in his motor-car and afterwards to break down at a spot where it was impossible to get any other vehicle. MR. ARMYNE cannot too emphatically express his regret at the occurrence, and his hope that trust in his good faith as a worker in the cause of Fiscal Reform may not be permanently shattered.

III.

Sir Vernon Boyce to Mr. Armyne.

DEAR ARMYNE,—I think you ought to know that I came across your Frenchman with a gun in the Lower Spinney this morning, evidently intending to get what he could. He explained to me that he distinctly understood you to say that he was at liberty to shoot there. How such a misunderstanding can have arisen I cannot guess, but he is now clearly informed as to divisions of land and other matters which apparently are different in France. It is all right, but I think you ought to keep an eye on him.

Yours sincerely,

VERNON BOYCE.

IV.

Mrs. Armyne to her sister.

(Extract.)

ACHILLE is certainly very useful, although his mercurial French nature makes him a little too careless about time, and once or twice he has been nowhere to be found at important junctures. For instance, we completely missed Lord TANCATER'S wedding the other day. Not that that mattered very much, especially as we had sent a silver inkstand, but ADRIAN is rather annoyed. ACHILLE plays the mandoline charmingly

(we hear him at night in the servants' hall), and he has been teaching me *repoussé* work.

V.

Mrs. Armyne to Mrs. Jack Lyon.

DEAR MRS. LYON,—My husband and myself are deeply distressed to have put out your table last evening, but it was one of those accidents that occur now and then, and which there is no foreseeing or remedying. The fact is that we were all ready to go and had ordered the car, when it transpired that ACHILLE, our chauffeur, had been called to London by telegram, and had left in so great a hurry that he had no time to warn us. By the time we could have sent to the village and got a carriage your dinner would have been over, and so we decided not to go at all. ACHILLE has not yet returned, which makes us fear that the poor fellow, who has relatives in Soho, may have found real trouble.

Yours sincerely, EMILY ARMYNE.

VI.

Mr. Armyne to Achille Le Bon.

DEAR ACHILLE,—I am very sorry to have to tell you that it has been made necessary for us to ask you to go. This is not on account of any dissatisfaction that we have with you, but merely that Mrs. ARMYNE has heard of the son of an old housekeeper of her father's who wishes for a post as chauffeur, and she feels it only right that he should be given a trial. You will, I am sure, see how the case stands. Perhaps we had better say that a month's notice begins from to-day, but you may leave as much earlier as you like. I shall, of course, be only too pleased to do all I can to find you another situation. I should have told you this in person, but had to go to town, and now write because I think it would be wrong not to let you have as early an intimation of Mrs. ARMYNE'S decision as possible. I am,

Yours faithfully,

ADRIAN ARMYNE.

VII.

Mr. Armyne to Achille Le Bon.

(By hand.)

DEAR ACHILLE,—I am afraid that a letter which was posted to you from London when I was last there, a month ago, cannot have reached you. Letters are sometimes lost, and this must be one of them. In it I had to inform you that Mrs. ARMYNE, having made arrangements for an English chauffeur who has claims on her consideration (being the son of an old housekeeper of her father's, who was in his service for many years, and quite one of the family), it was made necessary for us, much against our will, for we esteem you very highly, to ask you to go. As that letter

miscarried I must now repeat the month's notice that I then was forced to give, and the permission for you to leave at any time within the month if you like. I am, yours faithfully,

ADRIAN ARMYNE.

VIII.

Mr. Armyne to his nephew Sidney Burnet. (Extract.)

There seems to be nothing for it but to sell our car. This is a great blow to us, but we cannot go on as we are, apparently owning a car but in reality being owned by a chauffeur.

IX.

Sidney Burnet to Mr. Armyne.

DEAR UNCLE,—Don't sell the car. The thing to do is to pretend to sell it, get rid of your NAPOLEON, and then have it back. Why not say I have bought it? I will come over one day soon and drive it home. Say Thursday morning.

Your affectionate nephew,

SIDNEY.

X.

Mr. Armyne to Mr. Sidney Burnet.

MY DEAR SIDNEY,—Your plan seems to me to be ingenious, but your aunt is opposed to it. She says that ACHILLE might find it out. Suppose, for example, he came back for something he had forgotten and saw the car in the coach-house again! What should we do? Another objection is that poor JOB is ill, and ACHILLE remarked to me the other day that before he took to engineering he was a gardener. From what I know of him this means that, unless JOB gets better, ACHILLE—if your plan is carried through—will ask to be retained in JOB'S place, and this will mean that we shall never see asparagus or strawberries again. Don't you think that we might go to town, and you could ride over to "Highcroft" and give ACHILLE notice yourself for me? We will go to town to-morrow, and you might see ACHILLE on Monday.

Your affectionate uncle.

XI.

Sidney Burnet to Mr. Armyne.

DEAR UNCLE,—I went over and sacked ACHILLE to-day as arranged, but he replied that he could take notice only from you; and that from what Aunt EMILY had said to him just before you went away he is sure there has been some mistake. As to notice from you I'm afraid the beggar's right. He seems to have taken advantage of your absence to build a really rather clever pergola leading from Aunt EMILY'S sitting-room to the rose walk, as a surprise for Mrs. ARMYNE, he said. He has also re-painted all your bookshelves and mended that pair of library steps. With the dispatch

of this bulletin I retire from the position of discharger of Frenchmen.

Your affectionate nephew,
SIDNEY.

XII.

Mrs. Jack Lyon to a friend a few months later. (Extract.)

You remember the ARMYNES? In despair at ever getting rid of their chauffeur, who certainly led them a fearful dance, although he was rather a dear creature, the poor things let their house for a year and decided to travel. I have just heard from BELLA, from Florence, that she met them toiling up the hill to Fiesole the other day, and behind them, carrying Mrs. ARMYNE'S easel, was—who do you think? The chauffeur!

THE FORCE OF EXAMPLE.

["How do you like North Dorset?" asked a working man of Mr. BALFOUR in Manchester. "I have no objection to North Dorset; we must take these things as they come," replied the PREMIER, who then shook hands with his interlocutor and stepped into his carriage."—*Daily Paper.*]

As Mr. ALFRED LYTTELTON was returning the other day from an amateur theatrical performance of *A Chinese Honeymoon*, he was accosted by a sandwichman, who asked him, "What price Chinese wives and families in the Transvaal?" "My good man," replied Mr. LYTTELTON, "I have no objection to Chinese wives and families. We must take these things as they come,—or don't come," and, politely handing the man a choice Borneo cigar, the Colonial Secretary adroitly turned into an "A B C," where he ordered birds'-nest soup and roast puppy.

"What do you think of the Board of Trade Returns?" asked an Aston Villa Forward of the ex-Colonial Secretary, as Mr. CHAMBERLAIN was recently making some purchases in Birmingham. "What do I think of the Board of Trade Returns?" echoed Mr. CHAMBERLAIN in his most genial tones. "Why, I think they're perfectly lovely! Of course I'm not going to take them lying down, but that's no reason why they should make me sit up." With these words Mr. CHAMBERLAIN presented his questioner with a choice orchid, patted him on the back, and took a flying leap into a passing hansom.

As Mr. BRODRICK was leaving the India Office a few days ago, he was hailed by an omnibus-driver with the trenchant query, "How do you like Lord CURZON?" Mr. BRODRICK, with that sunny smile and ready tact which have endeared him to all classes in the community, immediately rejoined: "What's the matter with Lord CURZON? He's all right!" The



IMITATION THE SINCEREST FORM OF FLATTERY.

Lady Grabington (to very distinguished artist, whom she has just met for the first time). "DO YOU KNOW I AM SO VERY PLEASED TO MEET YOU, AND I MUST TELL YOU, MY LITTLE SISTER HAS MADE SOME REALLY QUITE TOO WONDERFUL COPIES FROM SOME OF YOUR ILLUSTRATIONS, AND WE ALL THINK SHE OUGHT TO MAKE QUITE A LOT OF MONEY OUT OF THEM. OH! AND COULD YOU TELL ME WHERE SHE COULD SELL THEM, AND ALL THAT SORT OF THING, IT WOULD BE SO AWFULLY JOLLY FOR HER, DON'T YOU KNOW!" [Distinguished artist thinks it would, and feels very highly flattered.]

'bus-driver shook his head, but Mr. BRODRICK, determined not to miss an opportunity of conciliating public opinion, mounted the top of the omnibus, and taking a front seat drove off in such absorbing conversation with the Jehu that the 'bus ran into one of the lions in Trafalgar Square.

As Mr. GEORGE WYNDHAM was on his way to read a paper on SHAKESPEARE'S sonnets in relation to the Irish Bacon trade at Mr. SIDNEY LEE'S superb mansion in Kensington, he was suddenly stopped by an infuriated Orangeman from Belfast, who shouted at him, "What do you think of Ulster now?" "Oh, I suppose I mustn't complain of Ulster," replied the Irish Secretary. "It is all

in the day's work." With this he pressed a fine cabinet photograph of Sir ANTONY MACDONNELL on his interrogator, twirled his moustaches to their best Rodin sleekness, and hurried off to Lexham Gardens.

"Where's your WILLIE SHAKESPEARE now?" asked a member of the Stage Society of Mr. BEERBOHM TREE, as the great Actor-Manager stood on the steps of the Garrick Club, thoughtfully perusing a telegram from a contortionist who wanted a leading part in the next revival of *King Lear*. "Anywhere but in my theatre," replied the Friend of the Footlights, turning lightly on his heel and disappearing through the historic swing doors.

QUEEN SYLVIA.

CHAPTER XII.

How the Queen found her father, retained her crown, and became engaged to be married.

THE butler, having made the startling announcement of the arrival of King OTHO's emissary, stood still and expressionless in the attitude customary to well-trained domestics. For a time nobody spoke, for everyone felt that the incident was in some mysterious way big with fate. SYLVIA was the first to recover herself:—

"Show the emissary in at once," she said in a tone of ceremony. "It is not fitting that one who brings a message from King OTHO should be kept waiting. We desire all who are present to stay, for thus there will be an appearance of state about our reception."

The next moment the emissary was introduced. He was an aged nobleman of Eisenblut, and his uniform glittered with decorations that bespoke a long career devoted to the service of his country. It was for this reason that his sovereign had selected him for the mission—for this reason, and also because he spoke the language of Hinterland fluently and without a trace of foreign accent. When he came before the Queen he made a low obeisance, and then, drawing himself up to his full height, he produced a letter and spoke:—

"Your Majesty," he said, "my august master King OTHO has confided to my care this precious document for presentation to your Majesty. Deign to read it and honour me by permitting me to take your gracious commands as to the answer I am to convey to my King."

With this he bowed again and handed the letter to SYLVIA, who broke the seal and read it. Then she looked up with a flushed face, and her eyes met the anxious eyes of her mother.

"Yes, Mamma," she said, "the letter is indeed from King OTHO. He declares his unalterable affection for me, and asks me to marry him when I shall have reached the age of seventeen. Oh, Mamma, I am so happy!" And she sought her mother's side and flung her arms about her neck.

"I trust," said her mother, "he may be worthy of you. You may be sure at any rate that you will find no obstacle to your happiness in me."

"Your Highness," interposed the Lord Chancellor, who had by no means taken in good part the enforced interruption of his lecture, "your Highness forgets the fundamental law which makes the consent of *both* parents essential."

"But I had not forgotten it," said SYLVIA with dignity. "My mind is irrevocably made up. As Queen I could not break a law. As subject I can, and I mean to, be the consequences what they may. On my seventeenth birthday I shall abdicate, and shall then marry OTHO."

At this terrible declaration a shudder of horror seemed to go through those who heard it. The emissary started back, and placed his hand before his eyes as though to shut out some dreadful spectacle; the Grand Duchess fell into a chair and gave way to tears; and the Naval Blue-Stick, having darted forward, was clutched by SARAH, who, in the midst of her own distracted feelings, was yet able to counsel him to preserve that self-restraint which his office and the presence of the monarch rendered necessary. The Lord Chancellor too was moved, but he soon regained his composure and cleared his throat and spoke:—

"It is my duty," he said, "to point out to your Majesty that another fundamental law forbids the course you propose to take——"

"I am tired of your fundamental laws," observed SYLVIA, not without petulance—"thoroughly tired."

"Your Majesty," continued the Lord Chancellor, "has my full sympathy. The law, however, for which I am in no way

responsible, declares,"—here he opened his book and read from it—"that it shall not be lawful for a King or Queen to abdicate the Crown before the age of sixty——"

"I shall certainly do it at sixty," said SYLVIA.

"and," continued the Lord Chancellor doggedly, "'a King or a Queen having once been proclaimed and duly crowned shall be presumed to have an indefeasible title, and such King or Queen shall in no way be disturbed or impaired or impeded in the exercise of his or her royal functions by any person who may assert a superior claim to the Crown.' Thus your Majesty will perceive that even if, to suppose an unhappily impossible case, your royal father were to return, he could in no way disturb your Majesty on your throne."

The Lord Chancellor ended and looked round solemnly, but at this point the Naval Blue-Stick could be restrained no longer. He broke from the background and from SARAH's grasp, and rushed to the Queen.

"Avast there, my Lord Chancellor," he shouted, "avast. And as for you, my lass, my pretty little lass, you shall have all you want—ay, and you shall be Queen still, God bless you!"

"And pray, Sir," said SYLVIA icily, "who are you that you should——"

"Who am I?" said the Naval Blue-Stick; "why, bless your sweet face, I'm your father. Oh, no wonder you stare—but I wasn't drowned, and I've come back to make you happy. I've got all my proofs; but this lady"—he turned to the Grand Duchess—"will recognise her monogram tattooed upon my arm"; and he bared his right arm before his wife, who gave one wild look at it and then, in obedience to the violence of her emotions and the traditions of her sex, screamed slightly and fainted away.

In this fashion HILDEBRAND was restored to his family, and the Queen found her father. I need hardly add that the consent of both parents was given to SYLVIA's engagement, and that on her seventeenth birthday she was married to King OTHO of Eisenblut. Both they and their subjects are very happy, and their son, a promising lad, will one day reign over the two Kingdoms united in one.

THE END.

Strenuous Teddy's New Billet.

A *Reuter* cable from Washington states that "the House of Representatives Committee on Inter-State and Foreign Commerce has authorised a favourable report on the Mann Bill, abolishing the Panama Commission, and placing the work of constructing the Canal entirely in the hands of the President of the United States."

Why not call it frankly the One Mann Bill?

WHAT HAMLET SAYS TO IT.—MRS. KENDAL, at the New Vagabonds' dinner, is reported to have concluded her speech with these memorable words, "I am determined to try the part of *Hamlet*." Ahem! SARAH B. did it, so why not MADGE K.? *A propos*, the Queen in *Hamlet* observes, "The lady doth protest too much, methinks." Whereupon *Hamlet* replies, "O, but she'll keep her word." *Qui virra verra*.

"WHY DRAG IN VELASQUEZ?"—It could not be avoided. Maitre RODIN, interviewed concerning the work of JAMES MCNEILL WHISTLER, fell into the trap, and, within a few minutes, up popped VELASQUEZ! Mr. Dick could no more keep the head of CHARLES THE FIRST out of his Memorial than can anyone, speaking about WHISTLER, omit VELASQUEZ. Poor JAMES! Rest, rest, perturbed spirit. Why can't he be left alone, that is, without VELASQUEZ?



WHAT OUR ARTIST HAS TO ENDURE!

Cottager. "Do you ever larn folks ter paint picters like that there, Sir?"

Artist. "Oh, yes—sometimes. Why do you ask?"

Cottager. "Well, Sir, this 'ERE BOY O' MINE AIN'T FIT FOR NUTHIN'. 'E BE THAT THERE DELICATE 'E CAN'T DO NO 'ARD WORK, AN' NOT BEIN' QUITE RIGHT IN 'IS 'EAD, I THOUGHT AS 'OW THIS 'ERE 'UD BE A NICE LIGHT OCCUPATION FOR 'E."

WHY NOT MAKE THE BIRTH-COLUMN INTERESTING?

A WEEKLY paper has the following:—

"January —, at —, to Mr. and Mrs. —, another dear little girl."

No doubt this marks the beginning of a new departure in journalism. The birth-column has long been regarded as monotonous and prosaic. The stereotyped form is now likely to disappear, and in its place we may expect to see the spontaneous and untrammelled expression of parental joys. This is the style we anticipate:—

February 8, at Cradley, to Mr. and Mrs. SMITH, a bouncing-boy this time (the very image of his pa).

February 10, at Kidderminster, to Mr. and Mrs. QUIVERFUL, twins again!

February 12.—Mr. and Mrs. GIRLINGTON have the inexpressible delight of announcing to their numerous friends that they have now fourteen daughters, instead of thirteen, as formerly. Mr. and Mrs. G. are, however, rather sorry it wasn't a boy.

The Bogie Principle applied to Omnibuses.

THE following advertisement for an artiste in the Illusionist line of business appears in the *Stage*:—

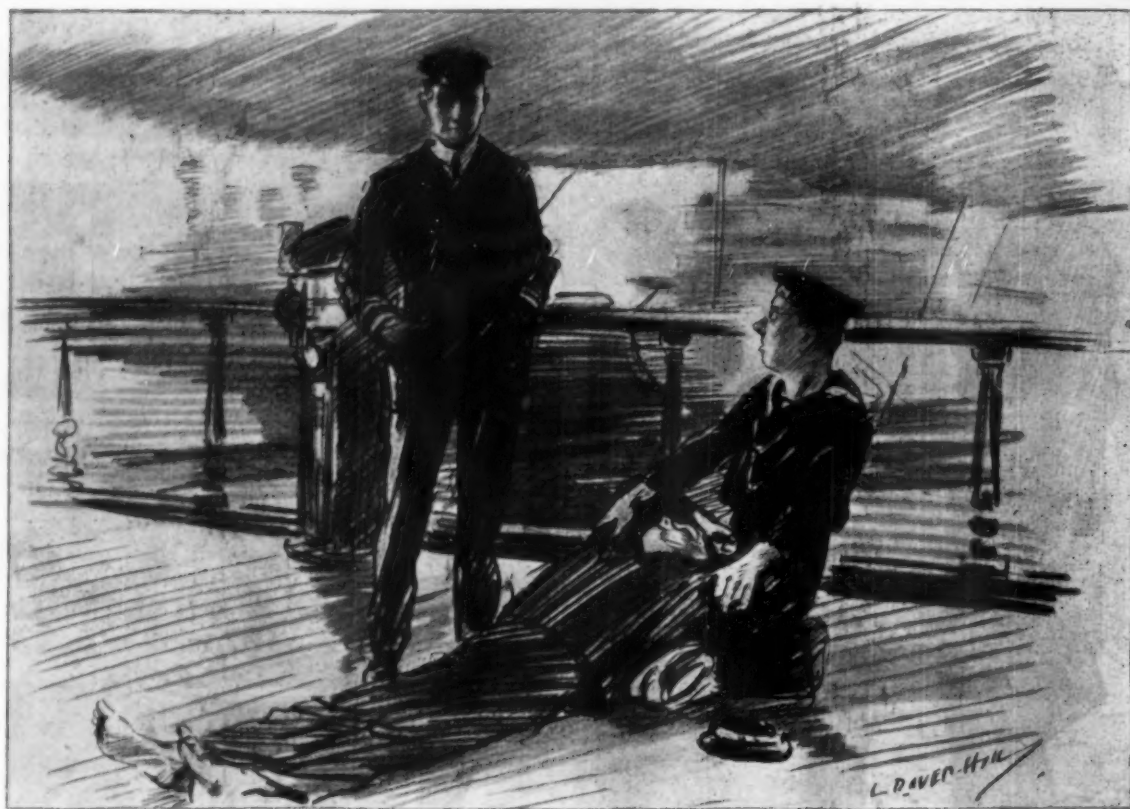
WANTED.—Young Girl . . . One used to Ghost Bus.

More Commercial Candour.

"—'s Annual Sale is now proceeding. Remnants in all departments this day. New Grill Room has been added."
Daily Dispatch.

PURCHASE a — bicycle and insure your life.—*Catalogue of a Cycle Company.*

WE are glad to learn that that famous Head Master, Dr. THRING of Uppingham, has become an eponymous hero. The *Yorkshire Post*, in an obituary notice of the Rev. THEOPHILUS ROWE, speaks of him as having been at one time Assistant Master at "Uppingham-under-Thring."



Surgeon (examining in the practical methods of reviving the apparently drowned). "NOW, HOW LONG WOULD YOU PERSEVERE IN THOSE MOTIONS OF THE ARMS?" Blue Jacket (from the Emerald Isle). "UNTIL HE WAS DEAD, SIR!"

CHARIVARIA.

THE Russian failure in the fighting on the Hunho is a painful set-back after the victories at St. Petersburg.

A Court of Inquiry has found that the Winter Palace occurrence, whereby a loaded gun was fired without hitting the Czar, was an accident.

Now that Port Arthur has fallen, Admiral ALEXEIEFF has received the title of Viceroy of Manchuria, in place of his former title of Viceroy of the Far East. But even the new designation is somewhat cumbersome, and we fancy he will soon come to be called simply the Viceroy.

The practice among Russian officers of firing at cattle from the railway carriage windows on their way to the front has been described as inhumane. This seems hypercritical. They might have been shooting their fellow-citizens at home.

The Czar, in receiving a deputation of workmen, told them that their welfare was very near to his heart, but to come to him like a rebel mob was a crime.

Still, that was their only way of learning how near their welfare was to their sovereign's heart.

"General TREPOFF," according to the *Daily Chronicle*, "intends to arrange for a Press bureau." Should it not be spelt *bourreau*?

"We want to go back to Cologne," the Macedonian gipsies have informed an inquirer. We had heard before that our visitors stand badly in need of the waters of that city.

During the Hungarian elections a number of persons had their ears torn off. As one of SHAKESPEARE's characters remarked, in a less important crisis, "Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears."

The new marine drive at Scarborough, which was to have been inaugurated by the Prince of WALES, was informally opened by the sea the other day.

"If we had not had great Colonial responsibilities," declared Mr. CHAMBERLAIN at Gainsborough, "we should not be the people we are." But are we?

The persons who attend football matches are sometimes reproached with never taking part in a game themselves, but at Dublin the other day a misdirected ball broke a spectator's leg.

Many painful charges have been brought against aliens, and now the Chairman of an important brewery has called upon the Government to prohibit their entrance into England on the ground that they will not drink beer.

A Carlisle lady accused her husband last week of striking her in the face with the *Christian Herald*. It did not transpire whether she retorted with a *Punch* in the eye.

Dr. CLIFFORD has advised the inhabitants of Wigan never to buy a certain newspaper, and, in the event of their finding it in a railway carriage (when the cost would be nothing), never to believe it. We disapprove of his conduct in mentioning the paper's actual name in connection with so pronounced an innuendo; but at the same time we are free to admit that we ourselves have often noticed newspapers lying on the seats of railway carriages.



POUR LE MÉRITE.

THE MIKADO (to the Czar). "MAY YOUR MAJESTY LONG CONTINUE YOUR 'TRANQUILLISING' METHODS. IN THE MEANTIME, DEIGN TO ACCEPT THIS DECORATION AS JAPAN'S BEST FRIEND."

"ON HALF A SHEET OF NOTE-PAPER."

EXTRACT FROM THE RECESS DIARY OF TOBY, M.P.

Monday, February 6.—Much stir of late about discovery of unfinished novel by DIZZY. The MEMBER FOR SARK has had corresponding luck in another direction. Turning over long-preserved contents of waste-paper baskets bought at the Gad's Hill sale, he came upon what was evidently the first draft of Chapter XIV. of *Nicholas Nickleby*. Has generously placed it at my disposal.*

It begins in sequence to the prelude to the interview Mr. Gregsbury, M.P. concedes to his dissatisfied constituents.

"Now, Gentlemen," said Mr. Gregsbury (laying down the proofs of a new pamphlet on which Mr. Pugstyle's quick eye caught the title, "What Matters Anything?"), "you are dissatisfied with my conduct; at least so I'm told by those who read the newspapers."

At this point divagation is made. The great novelist, with almost weird prophetic gift piercing the future hid by a new century, recognises the political situation of to-day. Mr. Gregsbury forecasts PRINCE ARTHUR, Mr. Pugstyle adumbrates C.-B. Only, instead of being spokesman of a disappointed constituency, the latter, heading a deputation, looks in as exponent of the views of an exasperated electorate calling for immediate dissolution of Parliament.

In the conversation that follows, copied textually from the recovered MS., members of the Boz Club and less erudite students of DICKENS will perceive how curiously little this first draft varies from that found in the final version of the chapter.

"Yes, we are," said a plump old gentleman, bursting out of the throng.

"Do my eyes deceive me?" said Mr. Gregsbury, "or is that my old friend Pugstyle, who for long nights through many Sessions has sat opposite me in the House of Commons, enjoying the amity that reigns on the Front Bench?"

"I am sorry to be here, Sir, but your conduct, Mr. Gregsbury, more especially in respect of your dubious relations with JOE, has rendered this deputation necessary."

"My conduct, Pugstyle," said Mr. Gregsbury, looking round upon the deputation with an affable smile, "my conduct has been, and ever will be, regulated by a sincere regard for the real interests of this great and happy country. I think the country understands that. I think that time is on our side, and that the movement of events, in so far as it is given us to forecast it, will more and more show where the country is to place its faith

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"Mr. Gregsbury (Mr. Arthur Balfour) leaned back in his chair till he seemed to sit upon his spine 'My time is yours—and my country's.'"

if it is to have security at home and peace abroad."

"We shall see," said Pugstyle, "and all the sooner if you will at once dissolve Parliament. Meanwhile we can't make out how you stand on this Fiscal question."

Mr. Gregsbury stretched forth his legs and leaned back in his chair till he seemed to sit upon his spine.

"I think, Pugstyle," he said, "I know what constitutes a clear statement as well as any man living. And I say with absolute confidence that you may study my speeches and my writings since this Fiscal controversy first arose—you may examine everything I have said and written, and you will find one consistent train of thought running throughout, perfectly clear, perfectly intelligible, and perfectly self-contained."

Here a voice from the back of the crowd asked, "What is it?"

Mr. Gregsbury affected not to hear.

"We wish, Sir," remarked Mr. Pugstyle, "to ask you a few questions."

"If you please, Gentlemen. Perhaps it would be more convenient if you interrogated Mr. CHAMBERLAIN. But let that pass. My time is yours—and my country's."

Mr. Pugstyle put on his spectacles

and referred to a written paper which he drew from his pocket.

"First of all," he ticked off, "will you resign, and when?"

"So far as I am concerned," said Mr. Gregsbury, with a smile that illumined the deputation, "so long as the party in the House of Commons enables the present Government to carry on their functions with dignity and utility to the public, so long shall we consider ourselves bound to them to give them what help and guidance we can. Go on to the next question, my dear Pugstyle."

(Mr. Pugstyle went on with his catechism very much on the lines of the published version of the novel.)

Mr. Gregsbury always smiling non-assent, a hoarse murmur arose from the deputation. One growled, "Resign!" which growl, being taken up, swelled into a very earnest and general remonstrance.

"I am requested, Sir, to express a hope," said Mr. Pugstyle, "that on receiving a requisition to that effect, framed in the fashion of an Amendment to the Address, you will not object to resign office in favour of some candidate whom the people, as indicated by recent by-elections, show they can better trust."

"I am perfectly ready," said Mr. Gregsbury, "to state, not as a matter of

fact exactly on a sheet, but on half a sheet of note-paper, the essence and outline of my views on the situation."

Here he produced and waved in the face of the deputation a slip of note-paper.

"My dear *Pugstyle*," he read, nodding pleasantly at his morning caller, "next to the welfare of our beloved island, this great, free and happy country, whose powers and resources are, I sincerely believe, illimitable, I value that noble independence which is an Englishman's proudest boast, and which I hope to bequeath to my brother's children untarnished and unswayed. Actuated by no personal motives, moved only by high constitutional considerations, which I will not attempt to explain, for they are really beyond the comprehension of the small



Mr. *Pugstyle* (Sir Henry C.B.) "First of all, will you resign, and when?"

fry of the Opposition, I would rather keep my place, and intend doing so."

"Then you will not resign under any circumstances?" asked Mr. *Pugstyle*.

Mr. *Greggsbury* smiled again and shook his head.

"Then good morning, Sir," said *Pugstyle* angrily.

"Heaven bless you!" said Mr. *Greggsbury*. And the deputation, with many growls and scowls, filed off as quickly as the narrowness of the staircase would allow of their getting down.

Here the MS. ends. Perhaps the most remarkable thing in connection with it is that the exceedingly few variations from the accepted text seem to have been taken verbally from two speeches delivered by PRINCE ARTHUR during a recent visit to his constituents at Man-

chester. They are in spirit and in phrase so entirely in Mr. *Greggsbury's* vein that they can be detected only by comparing the newly-discovered text with the printed book. As for the coincidence of the slips of note-paper, it is an actuality, for proof of which "overhaul the wollum," as Captain *Cuttle* used to say.

TEACHING THE RUSTICS.

(A Study in Electioneering Morals.)

I.—AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CONTEST.

From Mr. *Redde's* speech . . . I am no embittered partisan. There are matters, indeed, in which every one worthy of the name of Briton must rise far above the level of mere party politics. For example, I admit the foreign policy of the present Government has been framed with considerable wisdom, and has received cordial approval from all sides. . . . Turning to domestic matters, however, the Ministerial record is less satisfactory. . . . The instinct for change, Gentlemen, is a healthy one, and I venture to suggest that a holiday from the cares of office would be good for the present Government and beneficial to the country at large. (Hear, hear.)

From Mr. *Bleue's* speech . . . While admitting—as I do with pleasure—the considerable ability that is to be found on the Opposition benches, I ask you if there is reason in voting against a tried and trusted Ministry, which has led a united people through a period of considerable difficulty? (Hear.)

II.—HALF-WAY THROUGH.

From Mr. *Redde's* speech . . . time to speak out. (Hear, hear.) The language of abuse I will leave to my opponent, who is so great a master of it. (Laughter.) I will only remark that of this miserable, craven, inefficient fraud of a Government the country is sick to death. And by your votes you will serve it with yet another peremptory notice to quit. (Cheers.) Its foreign policy, as I have consistently maintained, is beneath contempt. (Hear.) . . . reduced the unfortunate Chinese to something like slavery . . . bribed by the brewing interest . . . and what of this Tariff reform and its results? No one can anticipate them exactly (Hear, hear), but undoubtedly there would be a great rise in the cost of food, and the results would be disastrous to the agricultural classes (Cheers). Vote, then, for the party of retrenchment, for those great principles of economy blended with progress . . . greatness of the country.

From Mr. *Bleue's* speech . . . plainer speaking seems necessary. What is to be said of a party devoid of intelligence, lacking in common honesty, and possessing only a superfluity of leaders

(Laughter), and an insensate greed for the spoils of office? . . . solid record of sound legislation which the Government can claim . . . and bring nearer the removal of an obsolete system which enriches the foreigner at your expense . . . and so contribute to the future prosperity of our great Empire. (Cheers.)

III.—THE EVE OF THE POLL.

From Mr. *Redde's* speech . . . paint that reptile crew in their true colours. In the Transvaal quite a hundred thousand Chinese are being done to death, flogged as they labour in clanking chains until they drop . . . it is simply a well-known fact that the Licensing Bill was introduced in return for a cheque of £215,000 10s. 6d. presented to the Government by the liquor-trade. (Shame!) If you vote for my opponent, the following will be among the results: All your children will be kidnapped by the Ritualists, imprisoned in monasteries—already purchased in anticipation by the Archbishops—and taught repulsive doctrines,—the cost of these monasteries coming out of the rates. (Sensation.) . . . Again, Tariff Reform will be introduced at once, your bread will cost ninepence a loaf, your beer sixpence-halfpenny a glass, your tea five shillings a pound. Beer at sixpence-halfpenny a glass, I repeat—every vote given for the Tory will be a vote for that! Nor is this all. The rent of every cottage and farm will be doubled. Any tenant in arrears, under the new Act which the Government means to introduce, will be sent at once to prison with hard labour . . . Is this unutterable tyranny to be brought about by your votes? (Tremendous shouts of "No!") Then remember these simple, unvarnished facts to-morrow! (Cries of "We will," and cheers.)

From Mr. *Bleue's* speech . . . monstrous fabrications. Every Chinese labourer in South Africa is given two cows, a six-roomed house, and three months' holiday in the summer . . . do not wish to exaggerate the results of Fiscal Reform. This much, however, is certain. Your wages will be more than trebled (Cheers) . . . but let me be careful; even then men over 80 may be paid no more than forty shillings a week. Unlike some people, you see I exaggerate nothing! (Hear, hear.) Rates will be almost abolished. (Cheers.) Your household bills will be halved. (Cheers.) A voice, "What about rents?" Everyone will be able to buy his own house, so rents will not have to be paid. Four times your present wages—no rates—no rents—cheap food . . . To gain them, vote to-morrow for me! (Cheers.) To refuse them—vote for the contemptible Radical who, for the sake of catching your votes, has even dared to tamper with the sacredness of truth!



CHANGELINGS.

Master. "Hi, there! WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY RIDING OVER THOSE TURNIPS? DON'T YOU KNOW THE DAMAGE IT DOES? CAN'T YOU SEE THEY ARE TURNIPS?"
 Farmer Jaryn. "BE THEY TURNIPS NOW? WELL, I BE BLESSED! WHEN I PLANTED 'EM, IT WERE RAPP!"

MRS. BRASSINGTON-CLAYPOTT'S CHILDREN'S PARTY.

I.

If I had had my way we should not have had a children's party at all this year. As I said to MARMADUKE, "Modern children, especially in such social circles as we move in, expect more and more nowadays, and I really can't undertake to do things on the same scale as the GULDENSCHWEINS, or the McMAMMONS, or the SPLOSCHMEIRS. And when you're always saying things haven't gone so well in the City lately!"

MARMADUKE said he didn't like the idea of our children accepting their young friends' hospitalities without making any return, but, as I told him, our TORQUIL and ERMINGARDE are such popular children people are only too delighted to have them. As for the disappointment to our chicks, they had both expressed their perfect willingness to accept five shillings apiece instead of having a party—which of course would come incalculably cheaper.

But he said things hadn't come to such a pass that he couldn't afford to give a children's party, and do the thing in style, too. He hinted that this was good policy from a business point of view. I represented that it was utterly out of the question for me to do the thing as it should be done on my housekeeping allowance, and he gave me an extra cheque, which he said ought to cover not only a first-class sit-down tea and supper but a really refined and expensive entertainment from HARROP'S or WHITELEY'S into the bargain.

I might have managed to make it do, I daresay, if only I hadn't had such frightfully bad luck at Bridge about that time that I was positively compelled to economise wherever possible.

So, when my maid MELANIE happened to mention a young man of her acquaintance who was anxious to obtain engagements at parties as a conjurer, and who (according to her) was quite extraordinarily talented, I told her to see if she could arrange with him to come to me and give an hour and a-half's performance for a guinea, this sum to include his cab-fares. I was careful to add this, because most entertainers make an extra charge for cab-fares, and they all seem to live a long way outside the radius. MELANIE was to point out that, as at my house he would have an opportunity of exhibiting before highly influential and wealthy people like the McMAMMONS, the SPLOSCHMEIRS, the GULDENSCHWEINS and others, he might find it to his advantage to make a considerable reduction in his usual terms.

Later MELANIE reported that she had so strongly impressed this upon him that he had declared his willingness to perform for me gratis, just for the sake of the introduction, and MELANIE added that he had offered to conclude by distributing a few small gifts, provided I saw no objection. I said if he liked to go to the expense he was of course at perfect liberty to do so, so long as he remembered that such presents should be of a certain value if they were to give pleasure to children in such a set as ours.

MELANIE assured me he quite understood, and that it would be all right, so I left it entirely to her—rather against my own instincts, for she was a girl I never could take to, somehow—it was always most unpleasant to meet her eyes in the looking-glass while she was brushing my hair of an evening. Still she was clever and useful in many ways, and I quite thought I could depend on her in a matter of this sort.

We had next to no refusals, and MARMADUKE not only came home early from the City himself that evening, but actually persuaded such busy people as Mr. SPLOSCHMEIR, Mr. McMAMMON, and Mr. GULDENSCHWEIN to look in while their respective offspring were still seated at the tea-table.

It was a thrilling thought, as one of our grown-up guests remarked to me at the time, that every one of those tiny tots was a potential little fifty-thousand-pounder at the very least,

always supposing, of course, that their dear parents met with no serious financial reverses before they reached maturity.

The little GULDENSCHWEINS are not what I call prettily-behaved children at table, and I am sure they had enough to eat of one sort and another, even if I did not think fit to provide quite enough hot tea-cake and crumpets to please them.

The other children made no complaints—except that the young SPLOSCHMEIRS declared the crackers were swindles and not worth pulling, as they contained no jewellery; but when, on ERMINGARDE'S announcing proudly that there was going to be a conjurer upstairs after tea, one of the little McMAMMONS declared he was sick of conjurers, and at *their* party they were going to have a Magic Kettle and a Ballet from the Empire, I confess I began to have misgivings about the entertainment I had provided.

For I really knew nothing about the man—not even his name. I had only MELANIE'S word for his being able to conjure at all, and I shuddered when I reflected that he might actually be capable of coming without a dress suit on.

It is not surprising that when at length every child admitted having reached the stage of repletion, and the Butler announced that the conjurer had arrived and was awaiting us in the drawing-room, I led the way upstairs with a sinking heart, and a fervent wish that I had not gone out of my way to do a kindness to this obscure protégé of MELANIE'S.

Many a time did I repeat that wish before that awful evening was over!

F. A.

HOTEL SIRIUS, LTD.

[Hotels for dogs have been started in America. These hotels are replete with every luxury and refinement; sumptuously fitted suites, baths, restaurants, gymnasiums and shampooing rooms are provided. Chambermaids and waiters of a superior order are placed at the disposal of dogs unaccompanied by their own valets.]

NOTICE.

LADIES and gentlemen belonging to Residents at this hotel are requested strictly to observe the following rules:—

1. Visitors desirous of being recognised may view Residents from behind the glass panels of the Caniary, whence they may endeavour to attract attention by quiet gesticulation. Tapping, whistling, chirping noises made with the lips, or other sounds likely to disturb Residents are strictly prohibited.

2. Sticks, umbrellas and whips must be handed to the hall-porter.

3. Damp, muddy, or untidy persons will on no account be admitted.

4. Dresses of serge or other rough material are strictly prohibited in the Lap-dog Lounge.

5. Boots must be removed prior to entering the rooms marked "Silence." List slippers may be obtained from the attendants on payment of 2d.

6. Evening-dress must be worn by all visitors invited to dine with the Residents to whom they belong.

7. Considerable offence having been given to Residents by the growing practice of visitors of speaking to them without introduction, the Management are now compelled summarily to expel all persons detected in this breach of good manners.

8. Visitors are on no account to pass comments whilst watching middle-aged or obese Residents exercising in the gymnasium.

9. Approved children, if not suffering from coughs, colds, chapped hands, or similar complaints, may join the recreation of juvenile Residents in the Puppies' Pandemonium between 10 and 11.30 A.M.

10. Visitors may on no account use the brushes or towels provided for Residents in the toilette departments.

11. During Siesta hours—2.0 to 5.0 and 8.30 to 9.30 P.M.—the hotel is closed.

HERR FLEDER MAUS'S NEW SYMPHONY.*(By Our Special Reporter.)*

THE new and long-expected *Sinfonia Patologica*, in D minor, of Herr FLEDER MAUS, the eminent surgical composer, was brought to a hearing for the first time at the Operating Theatre of the Langham Hospital on Saturday last in the presence of an unusually large number of students, and evoked an amount of enthusiasm which has rarely, if ever, attended a similar performance.

The symphony, which is in the usual four movements, may best be described as a complete translation into terms of musical sound of the progress of a serious illness. A few bars of introduction, of a sinister and morbid tendency, indicate the presence of disquieting but ill-defined symptoms, a short but dignified phrase for the trombone expressing the arrival of the family doctor. We are then launched, in the first subject, a long and feverishly agitated theme assigned to the oboe, upon a poignant exposition of his sufferings by the patient, the peculiar harmonisation suggesting acute bronchial trouble. The development of this theme suggests successively dialogue, diagnosis, and decision, a strepitous figure in the violins depicting the anxiety of the patient's wife on being informed that his temperature is 104, and that an immediate operation for extirpation of the gall-bladder paradigm is imperatively necessary. The second subject, heralded by a few short sharp chords on the brass, typifies the entry of the great surgical specialist, and is of an abrupt and incisive character. The presence of an anaesthetist and nurses is clearly adumbrated in the working out and, by the time the *reprise* is reached, the audience is reassured by the conviction that everything that money can procure has been done to relieve the unfortunate patient. His complaint follows a normal course throughout the rest of the movement, a striking coda in which two new themes make their appearance indicating the composer's personal views as to the relative merits of allopathy and homœopathy.

The second movement, in the same key, takes the form of a *Scherzo delirante*, the opening section by its inflammatory and tempestuous diathesis indicating only too plainly that the hero (whom it

is perhaps permissible to identify with the composer himself) is suffering from a severe relapse. Great activity prevails in the highest register of the strings, while the percussion department is reinforced by four side-drums, and the trombones in three-part harmony maintain an obstinate thrombosis which is well-nigh excruciating. An interesting footnote in the full score, however, suggests that if the effect of this section is too overpowering for sensitive tympana the use of cotton-wool is not to be deprecated. A brief trio affords dynamic relief, but its fantastic character makes

its way with unimpaired serenity, dying away in an exquisitely long-drawn cadence—in which due prominence is accorded to the solo piperazine.

The Finale, D major, with the cheerful heading "Convalescence," strikes a reassuring note in the confident opening phrase which leads into the first subject proper, which is positively redolent of beef-tea. Indeed throughout the entire movement a steady dietetic progress is maintained. Fish is clearly suggested in some vigorous scale passages, and a fluttering figure in the clarinets shows that the embargo on chicken or other white meat has at least been temporarily withdrawn. A brief interlude for two *contra-carne Inglesi*, superbly rendered by Dr. HAIG and the Hon. NEVILLE LYTTON, introduces a transient element of discord, but their eloquent protest is speedily over-ruled by the triumphant entry of the second subject, a full-blooded fibrous melody which emerges again and again with ever-increasing strenuousness until its final apotheosis in the exultant *Coda di Bore* is thundered out with the full strength of the orchestra.

It only remains to be added that the composer, who conducted his own work with unflinching nerve, was summoned again and again to the platform at the conclusion of the performance, the applause being loudly renewed on Professor RAY LANKESTER rising in the body of the hall and intoning in a compulsory Greek mode the welcome announcement that Herr FLEDER MAUS had consented to join the staff of the Natural History Museum as honorary Demonstrator in Polyphonic Anatomy.

**FANCY BILLIARD SKETCH.***A Massé Stroke. From Old Cotton MS.*

is only too clear that the hero is in the thrall of the most acute amentia, and the recurrence of the opening section in an aggravated form prepares us to hear the worst at any moment.

Happily these gloomy forebodings are not fulfilled. The third movement, *Adagio Comatoso* in B flat major, by its opening bars at once indicates that the fever has abated and the patient has fallen into a profound and trypanosomatous slumber. The instruments are muted throughout, from the violin to the triangle, and a deliciously narcotic atmosphere is diffused by a variety of ingenious devices, including the burning of *Papier d'Asie* and other oriental condiments. Elaborate analysis of this simple but extraordinarily poetic movement is quite unnecessary: it is enough to say that it pursues the even tenor of

WE hope that the character of those who advertise in the *Church Times* is not declining, but the following appeals are perhaps not quite all that is satisfactory:—

LADY wishes to find place for man (36), single, educated, as COMPANION-ATTENDANT . . . capable of anything.

BACHELOR Clergyman will be glad of someone to share his comfortable and bright Home . . . Suit Lady.

(It is a brother of the cloth who kindly forwards us the second of these advertisements.)

MOTTO FOR AN HEREDITARY SWEEP.—Follow scot.

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

THE author of *He that Eateth Bread with Me* (METHUEN) conceals sex under the indefinite signature, H. A. MITCHELL KEAYS. My Baronite would wager a ducat (if he had one)



that the writer is not a man. Only a woman could conceive such a character as that of *Clifford Mackemer*, and tell his story without giving him an occasional dig in the ribs, or from time to time punching his head. *Clifford* is tall and handsome, has a soft voice and a charming manner. So he treads the primrose path without reproach or scorn. To tell the truth, he is a cowardly blackguard who wrecks the life of his first wife. Abandoning her, he finds another, fuller and whiter of flesh, as Mrs. (or Miss) KEAYS puts it, and, when he is satiated, goes back to his first love, who of course receives him with open arms and undimmed affection. Her content falls short of perfection only because she thinks it is really too selfish of her to take her oiled and curled *Clifford* away from the other woman. That lady, suspecting *Clifford's* wantonness, having paid an angry visit to the first wife, is, on her way back, conveniently slaughtered by an express train. Wife number one, miraculously recovering from the very jaws of death, is thus enabled to make *Clifford* happy ever afterwards—or at least as far as the narrative goes. All this seems preposterous. But there are some strong situations in the domestic drama, and the characters of the *spirituelle* wife and her fleshly rival are cunningly contrasted. In a strange book perhaps the most extraordinary thing is the title. For any conceivable connection with the story it might just as well have been labelled *She that Taketh Tea with Me*.

Maga (BLACKWOOD) remains a marvel among monthly Magazines. Oldest of all, it has the energy and vivacity of youth. My Baronite, a diligent reader, does not remember a better number than that proudly numbered MLXXII. issued this month. It opens with a slashing bit of literary criticism that will almost make CHRISTOPHER NORTH glow in his grave with gratification. In castigating the work of the biographer for what he describes as "a piece of jaded and illiterate hack-work," the reviewer is certainly a little hard on the subject of the biography. But when a Scotch Reviewer's blood is up he is, as BYRON knew, prone to hit out all round. *Maga* has, since Peninsular days, been fortunate in obtaining battle-pieces by eye-witnesses. "Linesman's" contributions from the Transvaal, republished, have taken their place in literature. He finds a worthy successor in "O.," who to this month's Magazine contributes three marvellous pictures of fighting by sea and land in the Far East.



FROM GRANT RICHARDS comes a tiny book of *London Characters*, so small as to be incased in a cover ingeniously got up to resemble an ordinary match-box, and described as one of *The Safety Series for Children*. The safety seems to the Baron to consist in everybody's being safe to mistake the imitation for the real article. Not wanting to purchase matches, people will neglect this specimen of light literature wherein will be found sparkling verses by Miss JESSIE POPE, illustrated by JOHN HASSALL'S well-drawn and brightly-coloured character sketches. This little work of eccentric art is at present unique, as the Baron believes; and one thing is certain, that it is quite impossible to find a match for it.

The Liberal Magazine, issued by the Liberal Publication department housed at 42, Parliament Street, purports to be

a periodical for the use of Liberal speakers and canvassers. It is that in fullest measure. But there is no reason why its usefulness should be confined to one political camp. Unionists, Liberals, Free-fooders, Tariff Reformers, Retaliators, whatever we be, we are each all one in desire to have within reach a handy political record of the year. Such a treasure my Baronite discovers in this volume. It is quite true that the Editor, after Dr. JOHNSON'S way with the Whigs, sees that the Tariff Reformers, and the Unionist Party generally, do not get the best of it. But facts and figures are what the honest seeker after truth wants, and here they be in abundance.

The plot of *The Doll's Dance*, by CLARENCE FORESTIER-WALKER (DIGBY, LONG & Co.), is boldly devised, the painful story carefully constructed, and the novel so well written that from first to last the reader is kept in suspense as to the ultimate issue. The Baron is of opinion that only a very painstaking and experienced man of the world is likely to comprehend the precise nature of the letters which give their unscrupulous possessor so powerful a hold over the younger brother, in whom, rather than the elder, the interest is centred. "*Tout comprendre*," quotes the author, "*c'est tout pardonner*." The truth of this most charitable motto the Baron admits, but he is puzzled as to its present application. Does it mean that to perfectly understand "the Doll's" movements is to pardon all that the Doll has done? But which is the Doll? Is it the younger brother? Surely, if this be so, is it not somewhat unfair on the part of the author thus to label his victimised hero, who is anything but a dancing doll? The Baron can see no other mere puppet in the show. If then the Baron cannot "*tout comprendre*," how can he "*tout pardonner*" the author? Whether he does so or not, his opinion on the literary and artistic merits of the work remains as he has placed it on record.



ÆSOP ON TOUR.

A CERTAIN Play had a most thrilling Tableau at the End of the Third Act, which seldom failed to rouse the Audience to the utmost Pitch of Enthusiasm. The Heroine was a Maiden, condemned, after many minor Annoyances, to be thrown to the Lions in the Coliseum (which, in the Play, was supposed to be in Rome), and the Hero had decided to die with her, as the only logical Consequence of repeated Asseverations during the previous Acts that he could not live without her. And when they had embraced a great many times and assured one another between whiles that Lions do not hurt much if you know how to take them, it was their Cue to walk slowly hand in hand to a Massive Door at the back of the Stage, and, amidst the horrid Growls of the rest of the Company behind, to pass away to their Fate and their Supper. But one evening, when the fateful Portal was thrown open to receive them, it discovered the Carpenter's toy Terrier, wagging its Tail, somewhat guiltily indeed, but in an unmistakably friendly manner; and, as the Latin Exercise Book says, there were some who laughed.

Moral.—"The little less, and what worlds away!"

NOTE BY THE WAY.—If the present prospects of Kent coal are happily realised, then the best part of this county will be its seamy side.